

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLOSACLANT

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USNMR SHAPE

USDOCOSOUTH

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 USNATO 0659

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, NATO, OR, XF, XG, XI

SUBJECT: NATO STUDY ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF REOPENING THE SUEZ

CANAL

REF: USNATO 0658

1. HERewith MISSION'S INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF FRENCH CONTRI-
BUTION TO THE SUBJECT STUDY. THIS CONTRIBUTION, BEARING THE
CLASSIFICATION "NATO SECRET," WAS DISTRIBUTED TO POLADS AT
THEIR FEBRUARY 4 MEETING.

2. BEGIN TEXT OF REPORT:

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. THE REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL WILL HAVE, OF COURSE,
AS ITS MAIN AND IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON SHORTENING OF THE LINES

OF COMMUNICATIONS AND OF TRANSPORT FROM EUROPE TO THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE FAR EAST IN PROPORTIONS VARYING ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHIC POSITIONS BUT WHICH IN ANY CASE ARE CONSIDERABLE (40 PCT FOR COUNTRIES ON THE NORTH SEA- 80 PCT FOR COUNTRIES ON THE BLACK SEA).

THE PERSPECTIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC VIA SUEZ ARE, HOWEVER, MORE IMPORTANT FOR DRY CARGO THAN FOR PETROLEUM PRODUCTS NOTABLY BECAUSE OF THE CONSTANT INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF TANKERS, THE HEAVIENESS OF WHICH CANNOT USE THE CANAL UNDER A FULL LOAD.

2. THE WESTERN BASIN OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, WHICH THE OPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL WILL PLACE AGAIN IN DIRECT RELATION WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN, IS A ZONE PRESENTING A DOUBLE INTEREST:

A. ECONOMIC:

- OIL AND RAW MATERIALS EXIST IN ABUNDANCE IN THE RIPARIAN COUNTRIES OR IN THE ZONE IMMEDIATELY BEHIND (OIL FROM THE NEAR EAST, COOPER FROM ZAMBIA OR ZAIRE, COBALT FROM ZAIRE, CHROME FROM RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA).

- IT IS A ZONE OF HEAVY MARITIME TRAFFIC TIED IN TO THE DELIVERY OF THESE PRODUCTIONS. PETROLEUM TRANSPORT REPRESENTS NEARLY 90 PCT OF THE TOTAL. EQUIPPED PORTS ARE ON THE OUTLET OF THE RED SEA, IN THE MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL AND IN SOUTH AFRICA.

- IT IS A PASSAGEWAY FOR NORTH-SOUTH AIR TRAFFIC

B. STRATEGIC:

BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBILITIES IT OFFERS FOR:

- CONTROL OF MARITIME TRAFFIC AT THE LEVEL OF THE ORMUZASTRAITS, THE BAB EL MADEB STRAIT AND POSSIBLY ON THE CAPE-FAR EAST ROUTE.

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- CIVILIAN AND MILITARY TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

3. ON THE POLITICO-MILITARY LEVEL, INCREASED FACILITIES FOR ACCESS TO THE INDIAN OCEAN FOR SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPPING AND NAVAL FORCES CAN PERMIT MOSCOW TO MOVE THE ZONES OF PRESSURE FARTHER SOUTH. THE SOVIET NAVY COULD PROPORTION ITS FORCES MORE EASILY BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET (SOME FIFTY SHIPS) AND THE INDIAN OCEAN FLEET (SOME TWENTY SHIPS), THE LATTER BEING IN LIAISON WITH THE FAR EAST FLEET. RESUMPTION OF MILITARY AND COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC VIA SUEZ WILL UNBURDEN BY THAT MUCH THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILROAD, WHICH IS VULNERABLE AND SATURATED.

ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL, THE SOVIETS WILL BE ABLE MORE EASILY

TO PLAY A ROLE IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF YEMEN AND SOMALIA AND IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT THEY
WILL MAKE EFFORTS TO PRESERVE OR REINFORCE THEIR INFLUENCE
WHERE IT IS POSSIBLE, NOTABLY IN IRAQ, SYRIA AND WITH THE PA-
LESTINIANS.

ALTHOUGH WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL BENEFIT FROM THE SAM FACILITIES
OF ACCESS TO THE INDIAN OCEAN AS THE SOVIETS FOLLOWING THE REOPENING
OF THE CANAL, THE WEST MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DEVOTE TO THE PROTECTION
OF THEIR INTERESTS IN THIS ZONE MEANS SUFFICIENT TO
EFFECTIVELY COUNTER ALL THE EFFECTS OF AN INCREASED SOVIET
PRESENCE, EITHER ON THE ECONOMIC OR ON THE MILITARY LEVEL.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS REASON TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT
THE ADVANTAGES TO THE USSR WHICH WILL DERIVE FROM THE REOPENING
OF THE SUEZ CANAL VIS-A-VIS THE FAR EAST COUNTRIES AND NOTABLY
CHINA. ON MAY RECALL, IN REGARD TO THIS FOR EXAMPLE, THAT
THE CLOSING OF THE CANAL, WHICH INCREASED FREIGHT RATES FOR THE
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, HELPED THE ASIAN COUNTRIES TO PENETRATE
THIS AREA COMMERCIALY. THE CREATION OF A SINO-TANZANIAN SHIPPING
COMPANY IS INDICATIVE OF SUCH AN EVOLUTION. IT WILL ALSO BE
EASIER FOR THE SOVIET UNION TO COMPETE POLITICALLY WITH PEKING'S
INTRIGUES IN THE CAPITALS WHERE THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO
POWERS IS PRESENTLY MANIFESTED.

THE VULNERABILITY OF THE SUEZ CANAL BRINGS, HOWEVER, LIMITS
TO THE POSSIBILITIES IT OFFERS ON THE STRATEGIC LEVEL. FULLY
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UTILIZABLE IN PEACETIME OR PERIODS OF SIMPLE TENSION, IT CAN
BE CUT OFF IN A FEW HOURS IN A PERIOD OF OPEN CRISIS OR
HOSTILITIES.

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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II. MAIN ZONES OF INTEREST IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

ONE MAY DISTINGUISH THREE DISTRICT ZONES WHERE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE AND A MORE OR LESS TROUBLED POLITICAL CONTEXT MAKE THEM PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO STRUGGLES FOR INFLUENCE: THE OUTLETS OF THE PERSIAN GULF (IRAN, IRAQ, THE EMIRATES) THE OUTLETS OF THE RED SEA YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC AND PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN, SOMALI, ETHIOPIA, SAUDI ARABIA AND KENYA) AND THE MOZAMBIQUE CANNEL REGION (TANZANIA, MOZAMBIQUE, SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC, MADAGASCAR, MAURITIUS).

1. OUTLETS OF THE PERSIAN GULF

THE USSR MAY HAVE AS ITS OBJECTIVE TO BE ABLE TO HINDER THE PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENT OF THE WEST'S OIL SUPPLIES BY HELPING SOCIALIST REGIMES COME TO POWER. THE USSR IS CONCENTRATING
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ITS EFFORTS ON IRAQ AND SUPPORTS THAT COUNTRY'S POLICY IN THE PERSIAN GULF. THE SOVIETS MAINTAIN A MILITARY MISSION IN BAGHDAD AND FURNISH ALMOST ALL OF THE IRAQI ARMY'S EQUIPMENT. THROUGH THE INTERMEDIARY OF IRAQ AND SOUTH YEMEN, THE SOVIETS GIVE AID IN MATERIEL TO THE DHOFAR REBELLION. IN ADDITION, THE USSR HAS SIGNED ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.

2. RED SEA OUTLETS

THE USSR'S INTEREST IS TO SECURE FREEDOM OF PASSAGE UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES BETWEEN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE INDIAN OCEAN BY PROMOTING THERE TOO THE INSTALLATION OF SOCIALIST REGIMES AND BY ESTABLISHING BASES.

IN SOMALIA, THE SOVIETS HAVE COMPLETELY EQUIPPED THE ARMY AND ARE PROVIDING ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

THEY HAVE THE EMBRYO OF A BASE AND PORT OF CALL FACILITIES FOR THEIR INDIAN OCEAN FLEET AT BERBERA. THEY ARE ALSO INFLUENTIAL IN THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN WHERE THEY ARE IN COMPETITION WITH THE CHINESE.

IN THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC WHERE THE CHINESE ARE AS ACTIVE

AS THE SOVIETS, THE MODERATE ORIENTATION OF THE REGIME AND THE RISE OF SAUDI INFLUENCE PREVENT THE COMMUNIST COUNTRIES FROM PLAYING A MAJOR POLITICAL ROLE.

3. AREA OF THE MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL AND NEARBY ISLANDS

SOVIET POLICY AIMS AT THE COMPLETE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT'S "DECOLONIZATION," THE SEARCH FOR AIR AND NAVAL PORT OF CALL FACILITIES, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCIENTIFIC BASES IN A ZONE FAVORABLE TO ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH.

THE USSR HAS SOME COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN TANZANIA AND HAS AIR AND MARITIME PORT OF CALL FACILITIES ON MAURITIUS. THROUGH THE OAU, IT SUPPLIES THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS OPERATING FROM DAR ES SALAM AGAINST RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA.

THE FIRST TWO AREAS STUDIED PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN EUROPE'S SUPPLY OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS. THE WEST AND THE SOVIETS BOTH OCCUPY STRONG POSITIONS, THERE, MORE FAVORABLE TO THE FORMER IN SECRET

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THE OUTLETS TO THE PERSIAN GULF AND MORE BALANCED IN THOSE OF THE RED SEA WHERE, HOWEVER, MOSCOW COMES UP AGAINST CHINESE INFLUENCE.

THE MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL REGION, WHICH DOES NOT REPRESENT A SOURCE OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES, IS WIDE ENOUGH FOR NAVIGATION TO BE DIFFICULT TO INTERRUPT. WESTERN INFLUENCE IS STILL STRONG THERE BUT SOME OF THE PRESENT REGIMES ARE CONTESTED BY MOST OF THE AFRICAN STATES WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE USSR AND CHINA.

III. CONCLUSIONS

THE CANAL'S VULNERABILITY ALLOWS ONE TO CONCLUDE THAT, IN CASE OF A GENERAL WAR, EITHER OF THE TWO SIDES COULD PUT IT OUT OF COMMISSION SHOULD IT APPEAR THAT THE CANAL WAS HELPING ONE SIDE MORE THAN THE OTHER. THE ROLE OF THE CANAL DURING THE TWO WORLD WARS WOULD THEREFORE NOT NECESSARILY CONSTITUTE A PRECEDENT APPLICABLE IN A NEW CONFLICT.

IN THE EVENT THAT HOSTILITIES ARE RESUMED IN THE NEAR EAST, THE CANAL WOULD DOUBTLESS BE DECLARED A COMBAT ZONE BY EGYPT AND THE PROSPECTS FOR ITS POSSIBLE USE WOULD BE VERY PROBLEMATICAL.

THEREFORE, IT IS ON THE LEVEL OF PEACETIME STRATEGY THAT THE REOPENING COULD HAVE THE GREATEST REPERCUSSIONS.

THE FACILITIES WHICH WOULD RESULT FOR DRY CARGO TRAFFIC AND, IN A CERTAIN MEASURE, FOR AOIL TRAFFIC, WILL PERMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, WHICH CAN ONLY BE FAVORABLE TO COUNTRIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL TRADE WITH COUNTRIES ON THE INDIAN OCEAN.

BUT IT IS FOR THE SOVIET UNION THAT THE SHORTENING OF ITINER-
ARIES TO THE RED SEA, THE PERSIAN GULF, INDIA AND INDONESIA IS THE
MOST SIGNIFICANT. BY CONTRAST, THE REOPENING OF THE CANAL RESULTS
IN PRACTICALLY NO CHANGE FOR US-INDIAN OCEAN OR JAPAN-EUROPE
TRAFFIC.

THE REOPENING OF THE CANAL CANNOT FAIL TO HELP THE USSR'S
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PENETRATION IN A PART OF THE WORLD WHERE
THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL POSITIONS OF THE FORMER
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COLONIAL POWERS ARE ALREADY IN DECLINE.

THEREFORE, WHILE IT THREATENS WESTERN INTERESTS, THE REOPENING
OF THE SUEZ CANAL IS ALSO A THREAT FOR CHINA. THE INCREASED
DEPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES RESULTING THEREFROM FOR THE SOVIET NAVY AND
MERCHANT FLEET WILL NOT FAIL TO SHARPEN THE RIVALRY OF THE TWO
GREAT POWERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

END TEXT OF REPORT

BEGIN TEXT ANNEX

SOMALIA-USSR RELATIONS

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 USNATO 0659

1. A SOMALI-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION TREATY WAS SIGNED ON JULY 11, 1974 AT MOGADISCIO ON THE OCCASION OF MR. PODGORNYY'S VISIT. THE THREE FIRST ARTICLES OF THE TREATY PROVIDE FOR STRENGTHENED COOPERATION IN THE MOST VARIED FIELDS (INDUSTRY, AGRICULTURE, TOURISM, ETC....).

ARTICLE 4 CONCERNS MILITARY COOPERATION AND PROVIDES THAT "FOR THE DEFENSE CAPABILITY, THE HIGH CONTRACTION IN THE MILITARY FIELD ACCORDING TO THE SPECIAL AGREEMENTS ALREADY CONCLUDED. THIS COOPERATION WILL BE AIMED PARTICULARLY AT THE AID TO BE FURNISHED TO THE SOMALI ARMED FORCES IN THE FORM OF PERSONNEL TRAINING AND TRAINING IN THE USE OF WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT FURNISHED TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA FOR THE PURPOSE OF REINFORCING ITS DEFENSE POTENTIAL."

ARTICLE 8 PROVIDES FOR OCCASIONAL CONSULTATIONS WHEN THE NEED
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IS FELT ON PROBLEMS OF AN INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF A BILATERAL CHARACTER. ARTICLE 9 STATES THAT "IN CASE OF A PROBLEM WOULD BE OF A NATURE SUCH AS TO ENDANGER PEACE, THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES (HPC) WILL MEET ON AN URGENT BASIS AND CONSULT ON MEANS FOR HALTING THE RISE OF THE PERIL AND PRESERVING PEACE." THE OTHER ARTICLES CONCERN MORE GENERAL SUBJECTS.

IT SEEMS, FURTHERMORE, THAT THE USSR HAS CANCELLED THE DEBTS OWED TO IT BY VARIOUS SOMALI GOVERNMENTS SINCE INDEPENDENCE. THE AMOUNT OF THIS DEBT IS ESTIMATED AT APPROXIMATELY 90 MILLION DOLLARS.

2. SOVIET AID TO THE SOMALI ARMED FORCES

AIR FORCE: THE SOMALIA AIR FORCE REPORTEDLY IS EQUIPPED WITH MIG 15S AND MIG 17S (ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE) AND SOME TEN MIG 21S. IN ADDITION, IT IS REPORTED TO HAVE SOME TEN ILYUSHIN 28S, ANTONOV 24S AND ANTONOV 14S AS WELL AS SOME TEN HEAVY AND LIGHT HELICOPTERS DIVIDED UP AMONG CLASSES M4, M1 AND M8. SOME THIRTY PILOTS REPORTEDLY HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING IN THE SOVIET UNION. THE MAINTENANCE OF THE AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS IS SAID TO BE PROVIDED BY SOVIET PERSONNEL. BY KEEPING SUPPLY LOGISTICS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE SOMALI AIR FORCE UNDER THEIR OWN CONTROL, THE SOVIETS APPEAR TO WANT TO KEEP CONTROL OVER THIS IMPORTANT BRANCH OF THE SOMALI ARMED FORCES.

ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS THE RUSSIANS STARTED WORK SOME TIME AGO ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MILITARY BASE AT UANLE UEN, 100 KILOMETERS NORTHEAST OF MOGADISCIO. THIS BASE REPORTEDLY IS INTENDED AS THE MILITARY AIRPORT OF THE CAPITAL. ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF ONE OF THE CLAUSES OF THE SECRET MILITARY AGREEMENT

REPORTEDLY CONCLUDED LAST JULY, THIS NEW AIRPORT WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE WOVIET AIR FORCE WHICH WOULD USE IT AS AN INTERMEDIARY TRANSIT BASE. BETTER LOCATED FOR USE BY LONG DISTANCE AIRCRAFT AND EASIER TO PROTECT, UANLE UEN MAY NOW TAKE PRIORITY OVER BERBERA, WHERE WORK IS REPORTED TO HAVE SLOWED DOWN.

ARMY

THE SOMALI ARMY IS REPORTED TO HAVE 200 T 43 AND 40 T 54 TANKS.

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NAVY

THE SOMALI NAVY IS REPORTED TO HAVE TWO MISSILE LAUNCHERS BASED AT BERBERA AND FIVE TORPEDO BOATS, TYPE P6.

SOVIET EXPERTS

THE NUMBER OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY EXPERTS ATTACHED TO THE SOMALI ARMED FORCES IS REPORTEDLY AROUND 800. THEY ARE COMMANDED BY AN OFFICER WITH THE RANK OF MAJOR GENERAL WITH SIX COLONELS UNDER HIM WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR EACH OF THE OPERATIONAL SECTORS TRADITIONAL IN ALL ARMIES AND INCLUDING SPECIALIZED EXPERTS. THIS HIERARCHY FORMS A WEB PARALLEL TO THAT OF THE SOMALI ARMY. THE SOVIETS REPORTEDLY HAVE NO DIRECT AUTHORITY WITHIN THE UNITS.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE SOMALI MINISTRY OF INFORMATION IN ITS DAILY BULLETIN OF SEPTEMBER 1 PROMINENTLY REPORTED THE DENIAL PUBLISHED BY THE TASS ON AUGUST 31 CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THREE RUSSIAN MILITARY BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THUS ONCE AGAIN THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT REBUTTED WHAT IT TERMED AS "ALLEGATIONS" ABOUT THE SETTING UP OF SOVIET BASES ON ITS TERRITORY.

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